

Ge Haowen: Partner of Mo Yan's Creative Works

On the Translator's Responsibility

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Abstract—Since Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize in 2012, the importance of Ge Haowen's translation to Mo Yan's award has been affirmed and appreciated by the academic community. The importance of translation and translators to the "going out" of Chinese literature has caused the attention of literary world and translation. This author believes that a successful literary translation can not only be regarded as a foreign language version of the original work, but should be regarded as the joint creation of the translator and the original author. It is a concrete practice of cultural integration of different countries.

Keywords—*Ge Haowen; translation; cultural integration*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the centennial Nobel Prize Awards belonged to China, and Chinese literature was recognized by the world for the first time. Mo Yan's award is not only a symbol of the success of Chinese literature, but also a reflection of the development of oriental literature in the past century. Since the 1980s, eight writers in the East have won the Nobel Prize, and the era of world literature has finally arrived. The award of Mo Yan marks the beginning of the integration of Eastern culture and world culture. The success of Mo Yan's works is not only due to the universal theme of the work, but also the combination of Chinese and Western narrative methods. It is also the result of the creative work of the translator Ge Haowen. With the translator's subjectivity, Ge Haowen has his understanding of the translator's responsibility, the choice of translation works and the choice of translation strategies.

II. THE TRANSLATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

The relationship between creation and translation, writers and translators has always been an important topic in the field of literary translation. The understanding of the relationship between writers and translators can be different. Some people believe that "a good writer encounters a good translation, and there will have a romantic affair". Some people think that it's like a boxing match. The translation gives the original a punch. The original text also has a punch on the translation. There is an interaction between the translation and the original. Sometimes the original text wins. Sometimes the translation wins. After ten rounds, they get the adaptable status. Then, there will have great translation." [1] However, from the perspective of traditional ethics, there

is responsibility relationship between the translator and the original text, and the translation should respect the original work. Under the influence of this traditional idea, the translator's value to the original work seems to be at the language level. The translation of a word or a sentence, and even the choice of language will be criticized by the author of the original work. For example, Kundera is dissatisfied with the translator's use of synonyms in different places to express the meaning of the same word in the original text. He has publicly expressed dissatisfaction with the translator, "If you do the translation, you can't make ruin the original text." However, the value of literary works does not have correspondence in the culture of the target language. The original translation is likely to make the translation strange, which is unlikely to be welcomed by the target language readers.

After Mo Yan's award, the media affirmed the important role of the translator. Ge Haowen is regarded as "Mo Yan's chief midwife". Chen Anna is "the most important woman behind Mo Yan's award". In contrast, the attitudes of scholars in the cultural circles are calmer and more cautious. They have a positive attitude towards the importance of translation. They believe that Mo Yan has gained international recognition. "It is indispensable from the translation. However, the reason is not simple." "To a certain extent, it can be said that foreign translators have made Mo Yan." [2] Compared with the enthusiastic reaction of the media and the calm attitude of the academic circles, Mo Yan is very positive about the creativity of translation. He once said at the meeting of the Chinese Embassy in Sweden that "the work of translation is particularly important. The reason why I got the Nobel Prize is inseparable from the creative work of translators from all over the world." [3] As a translator, Ge Haowen has a clear attitude towards literary translation, which is regarded as "the translation for readers". He once said in a speech, "The purpose of our work is to try to please a writer who does not understand the target language, and try to be faithful to his original work? The answer is of course no. The author writes not for himself, nor for his translator, but for his readers." Regarding the loyalty, Ge Haowen's explanation is, "my responsibility is to faithfully reproduce the author's meaning, not necessarily the words he wrote." "The attitude of Mo Yan and Ge Haowen towards translation and translator has actually revealed a new relationship between original work and translated work. The translator has given the original work new value through the

translation process. In this process of re-creation, there is the co-creating partnership between translator and the original author. As some scholars have pointed out, Ge Haowen "brings Chinese and American cultures to a new space like a matchmaker". These two cultures have laid down the egocentric shelf. They will negotiate and have dialogue in a new space until they finally get the recognition and resonance of a certain group in the third space. Finally, it results in the "Nobel Prize in Literature and Mo Yan". [4]

III. THE TRANSLATABILITY OF MO YAN'S WORKS— PREREQUISITES FOR CULTURAL INTEGRATION

The translation process is the process of selection. From the selection of the original work to the use of vocabulary, each behavior of translation involves the determination of multiple choices. When selecting the text, it is necessary to determine the country, original author, original work, etc. of the selected text. These are usually determined by the initiator of the translation according to the established purpose. After selecting the original text, the translator is faced with the choice of cultural position, translation strategy and translation method. [5] That is to say, a good translator always chooses what to translate first, and then considers how to translate.

The translator Ge Haowen is a famous sinologist. He learns from Chinese American, Liu Wuji, the son of Mr. Liu Yazhi. He has deep Chinese and English knowledge. And he is recognized as the chief translator of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. In 1988, Ge Haowen first came into contact with Mo Yan's "Garlic Ballads", which was very shocking. He wrote to Mo Yan and hoped to obtain the translation copyright. "Mo Yan is so happy, I am also happy, too... At that time, Mo Yan is far less famous than he is now. And I am a scholar with Chinese reputation. I am very excited now. As a translator of Mo Yan's novels, I can't help but be a little proud of that. It's not for what I have translated. I am proud of that I know him as a writer more than 20 years." [6] (Gao Feng, 2012: 82) It can be said that Mo Yan's success stems from Ge Haowen's discovery. And it is caused by the unique attributes of Mo Yan and his works.

Among more than 200 works of Mo Yan, Ge Haowen chose more than ten novels such as "Red Sorghum" and "Life and Death are Wearing Me Out" to translate. These works have the universality of world literature and the heterogeneity of Chinese literature. These characteristics make Mo Yan's works translatable, and they are the prerequisite for cultural integration.

Western readers generally believe that there is no difference between Chinese literature of new China and Chinese literature after the reform and opening up. They are boring political preaching that can be ignored without any concern. However, Mo Yan's works are different. His works expose politics. However, his works do not pay attention to the political nature of people, but focus on the human nature in a specific political environment. As Mo Yan said, "I think a good writer will transcend classes, and go beyond the narrow partisan politics." He said: "I think I begin to do such rebellion behaviors since "Red Sorghum". I want to play

down class consciousness in the novel. And Mo Yan takes the depiction of man as the ultimate goal. The depiction is not to stand in the position of this class or that class, but to stand on the mankind." [7] In "Big Breasts and Wide Hips", the "land reform-Cultural Revolution-Reform and Opening" described by Mo Yan is different from the general description of historical events. He understands this history from the perspective of human nature. He said, "When I describe the land reform policy, the Cultural Revolution and the policy of reform and opening, I am not standing in the position of the Nationalist Party or on the side of the Communist Party. I think men of the Nationalist Party or the Communist Party are all human beings." [8] Therefore, from a perspective of the family, he describes the legends of people of different identities such as bandits, traitors, members of Nationalist Party, members of Communist Party, folk artists and even foreigners as members of a Chinese ordinary family in social change. In "Sandalwood Death", the small bureaucratic magistrate has the typical slickness of the officialdom, but dares to fall in love with the folk women. He believes in benevolence, and fights for the people. Finally, he dies horribly. The characters in this kind of story are free from the inherent aesthetic label, beyond the thinking mode of dual judgment, showing rich human dimension. The Western literature pays attention to the expression of life and humanity. They are tied with each other closely.

The translatability of Mo Yan's works lies in the combination of Chinese and Western narrative style. For example, in "Sandalwood Death", we will see the narrative style of the protagonist at the title of each chapter and the tail of the novel. For example, "Zhaojia is mad, Qian Ding hate talking; Sun Bing plays the traditional opera, etc. The way is very common in ancient Chinese novels. However, Mo Yan promotes them to the height of Bakhtin's "polyphonic novels" and describes the history from different perspectives. In the "Big Breasts and Wide Hips", Mo Yan "localizes" the stream of consciousness technique. When he described the stream of consciousness of Shangguan Lu's death, it presented the three-dimensional feelings and consciousness of Shangguan Lu by describing the senses such as vision, hearing, smell, as well as recall and association. With his own imagination and rich experience in life, Mo Yan integrated Western modern literary skills into Chinese traditional literary techniques, forming his own unique combination of Chinese and Western narrative techniques.

IV. "TRANSLATION OF GE HAOWEN FOR THE READER"— THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN CULTURAL INTEGRATION

The purpose of translation determines the attitude of translation and the method of translation. As we mentioned above, Ge Haowen's idea is to make the translation for readers. Ge Haowen once explained in an interview, "English and American readers are used to reading the first page of the novel to decide whether the novel is worth buying. Chinese writers do not pay attention to the first sentence of the novel. Chinese readers are also very tolerant. And the readers have great patience. Foreign editors believe that novels need a good opening to attract readers' attention. In order to attract readers, "another requirement of the editor

is to adjust the structure of the novel in addition to the deletion." Therefore, Ge Haowen often adopts translation methods such as abridgment, adaptation, and overall compilation, and decides whether to delete the original text and how to delete it based on the reader's preferences and expectations.

Ge Haowen's cultural characteristics, conceptual metaphors, supernatural use of color words and supernatural collocations, dialect vocabulary, etc. in Mo Yan's works will be partially retained, translated in the target language or directly deleted based on the requirements. At the level of chapters and paragraphs, there are some specific requirements for the division of written passages in English articles. For example, the paragraphs proposed by foreign scholar Bain in 1866 are divided into six principles. On this basis, Ge Haowen will make the adaptation of Chinese original works. For example, in Mo Yan's "Change", Ge Haowen adopts a method of combined translation for paragraphs with close themes and few words in the works, and a method of split translation for long paragraphs. Ge Haowen's translation is more like a method of "translation and adaptation". For example, in the translation of Mo Yan's "Garlic Ballads", Ge Haowen "even changed the end of the original text to the opposite ending". In this regard, Ge Haowen's has his own explanation, "Mo Yan's 'Garlic Ballads', it is a story full of anger, and the ending is not enough. I told Mo Yan about the editor's opinion. Ten days later, he sent me a new ending. I spent two days translating it and sending it to the editor. The results were very happy. Moreover, the Chinese version reissued has been replaced with this new ending." This is a vivid illustration of the interaction and cooperation between the translator and the original author. Regarding Ge Haowen's narrative method for the story, such as in the "Red Sorghum", the original story is intertwined with time and space to weave the ups and downs of the plot. Ge Haowen will compile the original story by means of segmentation, sub-section division, event reorganization and other means to make the time and space of the translation more clear. On the basis of striving to reproduce the original artistic effect, the translator weakens the extreme subjective color of the narrative language to a certain extent through logic and regularization, making it easier for Western readers to understand and accept. It is a decisive factor to promote the integration of Mo Yan's works into the world cultural field. [9]

The English translation of Mo Yan's works is undoubtedly a collision between oriental culture and Western culture, and an exchange between oriental literature and world literature. Mo Yan's work has been recognized by the Western world, proving that the practice of cultural integration is successful. The process of cultural integration not only reflects the world value of Mo Yan's original works, but also reflects the creative value of Ge Haowen in literary translation and cultural communication. As a Western scholar who is keen to spread Chinese culture, Ge Haowen's understanding of translator's responsibility, the accurate grasp of the value of the original works, and the translation strategies responsible for the readers all reflect the value and

significance of translator's subjective creation in the new era of world cultural integration.

V. CONCLUSION

Today, in the context of world cultural integration, translators are taking on more new missions and responsibilities than others. The translation should conform to the trend of historical development, update the concept, assume the mission, and play the translator's subjectivity. Through the awakening of the translator's responsibility, the selection of the original works, and the reasonable choice of translation strategies and methods, the translator introduces literary translation works that are more acceptable to the readers, helps the world literature exchange, and promotes the process of world cultural integration. In the complicated process of translation, how do translators choose literary works that are both national and universal? To exert subjective initiative will not only retain the literary value of the original text, but also make it easy for readers to accept. Even, the translator will adjust the original works according to appreciation and expectation of the readers. The translator will not only be the original spokesperson of the original author, but also become the creative partner of original author. It has become an important topic for translators of the new era.

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